

TRICARE Europe

Release

"Your passport to quality health"

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Social Security Numbers Help Dependents Avoid Health Care Access Problems

If you are a TRICARE beneficiary with a dependent who does not have a Social Security number, TRICARE Europe officials recommend that you apply for one as soon as possible to ensure continued access to the Military Health System for your son or daughter. *

While all U.S. citizens need to get a Social Security number, there are cases of military children as old of five or six who still do not have one because parents never applied. If you do not take steps to get a Social Security Number for your dependent child, you may experience problems receiving care for your child at your military clinic or hospital.

TRICARE officials use Social Security numbers to verify eligibility in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), a database used by the DoD to manage sponsor and dependent information.

When a dependent child is born, the military issues a temporary identification number* to serve as a 'place holder' in DEERS until a permanent Social Security number can be entered into the system. This temporary number is only valid for a limited period of time (270 days), based on when your newborn's DEERS record is first accessed. For example, when you arrange the first appointment for

**This also applies to foreign national spouses. These individuals receive a temporary ID number when they first enroll with TRICARE and must update their records with a valid Foreign ID number or a U.S. Social Security Number as soon as possible. Contact your TRICARE Service Center for more information.*

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your baby at a Military Treatment Facility, you then have 270 days from that point to update your child's DEERS record with a permanent Social Security number.

If you applied for a Social Security number and are nearing the 270-day mark and are still waiting, you may request a 90-day extension at your Personnel or DEERS office.

If you do not take steps to get a Social Security number for your child and you pass the allotted deadlines, you may experience delays and inconveniences when you try to arrange for care for your child at a military clinic or hospital.

Once you receive a new number from the Social Security Administration, visit the ID card-issuing facility (Personnel office) on your installation to update DEERS.

Of course, ensuring you and your dependents have unimpeded access to your TRICARE benefits is just one of many reasons that a Social Security Number is important. Visit the Social Security Administration online at www.ssa.gov for application details, as well as information about the Social Security system.